

NASA - LaRC

SAFETY NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF SAFETY AND FACILITY ASSURANCE, OSEMA

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RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

Choosing the right respirator for a job may be an easy task, most likely, an Industrial Hygienist has made that decision for you. But only you can make sure your respirator fits properly. And if it doesn't fit properly, you might as well not wear it at all. The Industrial Hygiene Section is responsible for the training, fit testing and certification for respirator users on LaRC. If you need information about the Respirator Program contact Mr. Roger Johnston Ext. 4-3208.

MAKING IT FIT

All respirators have one thing in common, they work best if (and some work only if) they fit snugly to your face. Whether you use a full-face respirator or one that covers only your nose and mouth, choose a respirator that's the right size for you and feels comfortable. Do not try to make a respirator more comfortable or better fitting by altering it in any way or repairing it with parts from another respirator. Follow instructions for putting it on and adjusting the straps if necessary.

When a respirator fits properly, the soft, pliable edges of the mask will mold to form a seal to your face, preventing contaminated air from entering. Adjust disposable fiber masks by pinching the metal nose strip to fit around your nose. If you wear glasses with a full-face mask respirator, you may need a specially modified model. Contact lenses should not be worn with a respirator since pressure changes can pull them off your eyes.

CAUSES OF LEAKS

What if your respirator fails the tests? Check the respirator for cracks or hardening that may prevent a tight seal. In addition, make sure no hair sticks out from under the edges of the face mask. Beards, mustaches and long sideburns will interfere with the seal.

As you work, be alert to any changes in the air you breathe. If you suddenly notice an unusual taste, smell, irritation or warming of the air you inhale, or if breathing becomes difficult, get out of the hazardous area immediately and perform the pressure tests. If pressure is maintained, you may need to change the filter or cartridge on your air-purifying respirator or check the air supply of your supplied-air respirator. But, remember that not all hazardous substances cause odor or irritation. The

best way to avoid contamination is to test your respirator's fit regularly, whether you notice a change or not.

MAINTAINING YOUR RESPIRATOR

Each time you use your respirator, inspect it carefully before putting it on. Look for cracks, dents or holes in the mask, and broken or worn straps or buckles. Elastic straps that have lost their stretch need to be replaced. You need a new respirator if the flexible material around the edges have become hard and brittle because it will no longer provide a tight seal on your face. Valves must be clean and functioning properly. Dry or cracked valves should be replaced. Replace your disposable respirator when it becomes clogged or breathing becomes difficult.

STORING

Sunlight and chemicals in the atmosphere can damage your respirator. Seal your thoroughly dry respirator in a plastic bag and store it away from direct sunlight. Avoid placing objects on top of it, if it loses its shape it will not fit properly.

BE ALERT

Your safety on the job depends on your ability to wear a properly functioning respirator and still do your job. Check with your supervisor if your respirator interferes with your ability to see, hear or be heard properly, or if it restricts movement so that you cannot safely do your work. If you experience difficulty breathing, fatigue, irritation in your eyes or respiratory system, dizziness or illness, leave the work area immediately and report to your supervisor. These could be warning signs that your respirator is not working properly. Your on the job respirator health is guaranteed when you properly maintain, store and use your respirator.

OSFA HOMEPAGE

The Office of Safety and Facility Assurance (OSFA) now has a homepage which has all services listed that OSFA offers. Some of the key information offered are:

- * Organization Chart
- * Points of Contact (list has the subject matter with the contact and phone number)
- * Facility Coordinators & Safety Heads
- * Safety Video Library
- * Safety Channel 11 Schedule

- * Red Tag Program
- * Safety Training
- * Safety Alerts
- * Safety Newsletters

This is a site you can visit and retrieve past Safety alerts, Safety Newsletter, who to contact for a specific task, see what videos are available for loan, and a number of other easy to use features. The site address is:

<http://128.155.44.11/OSFAHomePageStuff/OSFAHomePage.html>

FORM 66's

The Form 66, (Worker Appointment and Certification Form) is used for several different certifications on the Center. This is a two sided form and has to be filled out completely including the training section on the back. This information is critical for the certification process and any incomplete form received will be returned to the requester.

SAFETY CLASSES OFFERED

Just a reminder that the following safety training classes are available to be presented for you at your safety meetings.

Confined Spaces (permit required)

Confined Space Awareness

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Ergonomics (Office or Industrial)

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)

Heat Stress

Cryogenics

Chemical Safety (Chemical Refresher)

General Office Safety

If you would like to setup a class, contact your supervisor and he can schedule by contacting Butch Jones at 4-8743.